



REMARKS OF THE PRIME MINISTER J.H.A. EMAN ON
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 11TH ANNUAL
CARIBBEAN CUSTOMS CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 21,
1988.

IT IS ENCOURAGING TO LOOK OUT AMONG THIS GROUP
OF DEDICATED CUSTOMS LEADERS AND PROFESSIONALS
WHO SERVE AS OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IN THE
TERRIBLE WAR ON DRUGS. YOUR JOB HAS CHANGED IN
RECENT YEARS FROM THAT OF ONLY SEIZING
CONTRABAND AND COLLECTING DUTIES TO BECOME A
MORAL MISSION OF PROTECTING OUR SOCIETIES FROM
THE EVIL AND CORRUPTION OF DRUGS. MY OPENING
REMARKS THIS MORNING WILL REFERE TO THIS PART
OF YOUR JOB.

ARUBA'S STAND ON THE DRUG TRAFFICKING
ISSUE IS BASED ON TWO SIMPLE REASONS. FIRST,
DRUGS KILL THE INNOCENT OUR CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES ARE THREATENED. SECOND, DRUGS AND
THEIR CORRUPTING INFLUENCE DESTABILIZE
DEMOCRACIES. WE BELIEVE THE WAR ON DRUGS IS
THE MOST IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE FACING

OUR COUNTRIES. WE MUST COMMIT ALL OF OUR STRENGTH AND RESOURCES TO STEMMING THE TIDE OF DRUGS NOW - - BEFORE IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE TO DO SO LATER. THE COST OF INACTION WILL BE HIGH AND PERHAPS FATAL. WE ARE NOT TALKING IN ABSTRACT POSSIBILITIES BUT HARD REALITIES. SADLY, WE HAVE SEEN THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF DRUGS IN OUR REGION.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, ARUBA HAS PURSUED A POLICY OF "ACTIVE DEFENSE". THE CORE OF THIS POLICY IS TO TAKE PREVENTIVE MEASURES DESIGNED TO STOP DRUG TRAFFICKING AND RELATED ILLICIT ACTIVITIES IN ARUBA AT OR BEFORE THEIR INCEPTION. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS POLICY IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT FINANCIALLY, BECAUSE IT IS COST-EFFECTIVE, BUT ALSO SOCIALLY, BECAUSE IT PROTECTS OUR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY FROM BEING TAINTED AND CORRUPTED BY SUCH ACTIVITIES.

ARUBA WORKS HARD ON MANAGING ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS

AND CURRENTLY, WE AIM AT OPTIMAL CONTROL OF OUR DRUG PROBLEM HERE. BUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE DRUG PROBLEM REQUIRES MORE THAN A MERELY UNILATERAL EFFORT.

WE DO. NOT KNOW THE FINAL FORM OF THE SOLUTION TO THE DRUG THREAT, BUT WE DO KNOW IT MUST BE A MULILATERAL COOPERATIVE EFFORT AND THAT SHARED BELIEF IS ONE IMPORTANT FACT THAT HAS BROUGHT US TOGETHER HERE TODAY.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE SOLUTION MUST FOCUS NOT ONLY IN CUTTING THE SUPPLY OF DRUGS BUT ALSO THE DEMAND FOR THE DRUGS. OUR NEXT SPEAKER, COMMISSIONER VON RAAB OF THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE RECOGNIZES THIS AND IS A LEADER NOT ONLY IN DRUG INTERDICTION BUT ALSO IN CUTTING DEMAND IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH HIS "ZERO-TOLERANCE" PROGRAM. THE WAR ON DRUGS MUST BE FOUGHT ON BOTH FRONTS - - SUPPLY AND DEMAND MUST BE ATTACKED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

ARUBA HAS BEEN WORKING WITH OUR DUTCH AND AMERICAN FRIENDS AND HAS BEEN WORKING WITH OUR MORE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS ON COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.

IN PURSUING OUR POLICY OF ACTIVE DEFENSE, WE HAVE RECENTLY COMPLETED A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH VENEZUELA AND MET WITH MANY OF YOU IN BARBADOS LAST SPRING AT THE CARIBBEAN

CONFERENCE ON DRUGS. WE ALSO MET WITH OTHERS OF YOU IN LIMA, PERU JUST LAST WEEK AT THE SECOND U.N. MEETING OF THE HEADS OF NATIONAL DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND WE WILL BE HOSTING THE THIRD U.N. MEETING NEXT YEAR HERE IN ARUBA. THESE MEETINGS AND OUR MEETING HERE TODAY LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE MULTILATERAL ACTION IN THE WAR ON DRUGS.

ALL OF YOU HAVE A SPECIAL MISSION IN PROTECTING THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF OUR SOCIETIES AND, INDEED, OUR VERY WAY OF LIFE, WHICH IS BEING THREATENED BY DRUGS. OUR CHILDREN, OUR FAMILIES --- ALL OF US ---- ARE DEPENDING ON YOU.

INDIVIDUALLY, WE CAN DO LITTLE. ONLY UNITED IN A COMMON FRONT IN THE WAR ON DRUGS WE CAN FREE OURSELVES FROM THE THREAT OF DRUGS. I THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE AND I WELCOME YOU TO ARUBA.

THANK YOU.